Chairman’s Report
by Bob Flanagan

There has been much activity and upheaval in the cemetery in the last few months due to the commencement of the long-planned drainage and roadway resurfacing work in the Eastern portion of the grounds. The contractors in the main seem to be doing a good job in difficult circumstances, but there has been much damage to the roadway leading up to the area being worked on, and sadly damage to at least one memorial due to careless deposition of spoil and lack of protection to the adjacent stonework. The cemetery staff have been asked to keep a careful watch to try to ensure there is no more damage.

As part of the works there has been provision for routing a telephone cable underground past the Greek Cemetery (I assume it’s just a telephone and not a power cable). I didn’t know of this in advance else I would have asked for a junction box adjacent to the Greek section in case we ever get funds to use the Chapel there as meeting place/headquarters. A missed opportunity. One can’t cover every eventuality, but I do wish sometimes there were more people on the ground to discuss such things with. As to the next stage of the works, this really needs Lottery funding, but again I admit I just have not had time to try to progress this.

The English Cemetery in Florence

I have trouble too in keeping up with the progress being made by ASCE (Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe). But a note saying that The Friends of the English Cemetery in Florence had joined ASCE did catch my eye. The president of the Friends is: Julia Bolton Holloway, Professor Emerita
The state of the English Cemetery is precarious. The Swiss owners have again threatened closure because there is no money for repairs. The Friends group have to raise most of the money needed to restore the most famous tomb, Lord Leighton's for Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and for the tombs of Walter Savage Landor and the five members of the Trollope family buried in the cemetery, Fanny, Theodosia, Joseph Garrow, her father, Harriet Fischer, her half-sister, and Elizabeth Shinner, their beloved maid.

On the positive side, Iris Fromm, Bavarian Master Mason, restored 23 tombs in two weeks recently, and the lichen has been cleaned from six more tombs. The great wrought iron entrance gates have been cleaned and painted, and curving Victorian hand rails fitted to the steps. The Friends library continues to expand with copies of
books by and about the famous personages buried in the cemetery. And one tombstone, and its body of a child, were actually dispatched to Florence in the nineteenth century from Norwood, the tombstone being signed 'PIPER, NORWOOD', a well-known name in our own cemetery. Part of the inscription reads:

Sacred to the Memory of our Florentine Lily
Johanna Horner Zileri
Daughter of Massimiliano and Margaret Zileri, née Edmond
1861-1867

It has been a long-term aim to fully document the funeral masons recorded in our own cemetery. This would seem an ideal student research project if anyone is interested.

Dr Eleanor Mennim

We are sad to report that long-term FOWNC member and supporter Dr Eleanor Mennim died peacefully in York District Hospital on 15 May last year. Her funeral was held at All Hallows Church, Sutton on the Forest, on 23 May. Dr Mennim, a gynaecologist, not only wrote a biography of the scientific instrument maker William Simms FRS (1793-1860), but also had a headstone re-erected on the site of his grave at Norwood (grave 79, square 64) in 1991 (see FOWNC Newsletter 10, April 1992). Simms was a partner with Edward Troughton (1753-1835) and a colleague of the Astronomer Royal, George Biddell Airy (1801-1892). Troughton & Simms provided the optics and micrometers for the Transit Circle which defines zero longitude at Greenwich and three other major telescopes, all of which survive intact, as well as instruments for foreign observatories. See website: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/discovery/revolutions/airy_george_01.shtml for more information on the Transit Circle.

Bob Flanagan

Dr Mennim and the new tombstone to William Simms FRS, 1991
The cemetery continues to yield surprises. Mrs Wendy Wales is writing a biography of William Wales FRS (c. 1734-1798), the astronomer to the Hudson Bay Transit-of-Venus expedition (1769) and to James Cook’s second (1772-4) voyage, and Mathematical Master at Christ’s Hospital, Newgate Street (c.1775-98), and has kindly supplied the information given herein.

William’s second daughter Ann died of old age at the Mayday Hospital, Croydon, on 1 May 1853 and in her will asked to ‘be buried in the family vault in the church of St Margaret Lothbury with her husband and children or, if this was not possible, at Norwood’. Ann’s husband William Eyre (-1836) was a Wine and Brandy Merchant at 34 Great St. Helen’s in partnership with his brother Joseph. They had two sons William (1801-) and George (-1835); George settled in Australia. In the event Ann was buried at Norwood (grave 3,499, square 111), the grave being purchased by one of her executors, George Trollope of Christ’s Hospital. Sadly this is one of the graves illegally re-sold by Lambeth, so if there was a headstone it is no more.

William Wales himself was appointed by the Astronomer Royal Nevil Maskelyne in 1765 as one of four computers to work on calculations for the first Nautical Almanac, which was published in 1767. Maskelyne’s first assistant at the Royal Observatory was Charles Green, a Yorkshireman who had been appointed assistant to the Astronomer Royal James Bradley in 1761. Green was eventually chosen as astronomer to Cook’s first voyage to observe the 1769 Transit of Venus.

William married Mary Green, sister of Charles, in Greenwich in 1765, their first child, also William, being born in 1768, the week after William senior had sailed for Prince of Wales Fort, Hudson's Bay. He spent thirteen months at Hudson's Bay, where in addition to observing the Transit, he kept a full set of weather observations. He was the first scientist to winter at Hudson's Bay. In 1772 Maskelyne proposed William as Astronomer on Cook's second voyage on board HMS Resolution, when he was appointed to judge the effectiveness of the chronometer that had been developed by fellow Yorkshireman John Harrison. It was thanks to the trials that Harrison was eventually awarded the Longitude prize. By coincidence the parents of John Harrison and the parents of William Wales were both married in the same parish of Wragby on the Nostell Priory estate in Yorkshire.

On returning to England William senior became Master of the Royal Mathematical School at Christ's Hospital, a position he held until his death and burial in the school cloisters. His memorial tablet is now at the school at Horsham. The Royal Mathematical School is thought to have been the first institution where boys were taught mathematics, for the particular use and practice of navigation. Under William’s direction it became a top naval seminary, coaching a select few known as the 'King's Boys' for entry to the Royal Naval Academy at Portsmouth. Amongst his pupils was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and it has been suggested that The Rime of the Ancient Mariner was inspired by his writings (as well as by laudanum).
Felix Slade’s grandmother Margaret Foxcroft (née Roberts) who died in 1812 was my 4 times great grandmother. She had 14 children (8 girls and 6 boys). Felix’s mother Eliza was Margaret’s third child and was born in 1756. Eliza married Robert Slade in 1779. He was a proctor in Doctors’ Commons, the College of Advocates and Doctors of Law in Knightrider Street, near St. Paul’s, which since 1572 had housed the ecclesiastical (Court of Arches) and Admiralty courts. He eventually became deputy lieutenant for Surrey. The family lived at 24 Walcot Place (East Place). Felix was born there and remained there until he died. The house was on the corner of Walnut Tree Walk and Walcot Place; it no longer stands and the site is occupied by a block of flats called Culpepper House, Walcot Place now forming part of Kennington Road.

The 1841 Census lists 8 servants (4 male, 4 female). Perhaps economies or staff shortage may account for there being only 6 servants (2 male, 4 female) at the time of the 1851 Census. Henry Sarel, his butler, seems to be the only one who lasted the course and indeed ‘the three children of my late butler’ are mentioned in Felix’s Will which he made 4 days before his death on 29th March in 1868. By 1836 the only Slade family living there were Felix and his eldest brother William, who died in 1858. William and Felix were both also proctors at Doctors' Commons and both remained bachelors. Their first cousin Margaret Doran lived with them for many years and died at Walcot Place six months before Felix. She is described in various articles as ‘keeping house’ for the Slades – a better phrase might have been ‘house manager’!

No picture of the house is known, but Felix in his Will mentions the Glass Room, Drawing Room, Dining Room, New Library, Old Library, and China Room - add to that the bedrooms, kitchens etc. and probably a study; it must have been a large establishment. Horwood’s map of 1792 (updated 1813) shows that the house had the largest garden in Walcot Place, with ample space to extend the house as his collections of glass and prints grew.

When I started my research 18 months ago I understood from various articles, including the New Oxford DNB, that Felix had just one brother, William, already mentioned. It was suggested that I might find a picture of them in British Silhouette Artists and their work 1760-1860 by Sue McKechnie (Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1978). I didn’t, but I did find a silhouette of his mother, father, and brother Edward Foxcroft Slade. They are all by the late 18th century profilist John Miers. The text said that
Edward was educated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, a fact which the college kindly confirmed. He didn’t enjoy good health and in 1809 went to Malta to convalesce. On 15th August 1809 his ship returned to Falmouth and he died there that same day aged 27. The discovery that Edward had had a formal university education set me on the trail of examining university alumni records as surely Felix had gone to university; but there was no success. Quite by chance I discovered that brother William was a student at Gottingen University in Germany which he entered in September 1800; so perhaps my on-going enquiry to them there may bear fruit.

What family history jewels are to be found on the internet! Felix’s 25 page Will with 7 codicils clearly states on the first page: ‘I wish my funeral to be strictly private and to be conducted with as little pomp as may be and that my body may be buried in the same grave at the Norwood Cemetery in which my Brother William Slade is buried unless on account of my death taking place at an inconvenient distance my Executors may determine that my body shall be buried elsewhere’. On the strength of this by just entering ‘Norwood Cemetery’ into Google I came across Bob Flanagan’s Chairman’s Report No. 17 (January 1994) where he writes of the discovery of Felix’s grave. My trek from Northamptonshire was soon rewarded as Bob had included its precise whereabouts: ‘A brick vault with stone capping (grave 5,736, square 62) lies just to the west of the Davidge monument, opposite the Stevenson mausoleum. It is in reasonable condition’. In fact the letters are all readable only a few being weathered. The shield at the top, which must have been metal, is missing (see illustration on page 9).

The memorial inscription on the grave stone is very full. It notes that Felix’s mother and father were both buried in the churchyard of St. Mary’s Lambeth (now the Museum of Garden History) in 1832 at the age of 76 and 1835 aged 86, respectively. It next lists Edward Foxcroft Slade, their second son, who was buried in Falmouth churchyard in 1809. The mention of a third son, Robert, was a complete surprise. By visiting Norwood I had suddenly gained another 1st cousin 4 times removed! He died an infant, but no dates are given for him. The custodian of St. Mary’s Lambeth
confirmed that Robert is buried there and that his father, also Robert, shares the same
grave. The inscription goes on to commemorate William, the eldest son, who was first
to be buried in the grave at Norwood in 1858 aged 77. Next there is Margaret Doran,
who you will remember ‘kept house’ for William and Felix and was their 1st cousin;
she died aged 89 in 1867 and is also buried in this vault. The last entry reads: “FELIX
SLADE OF WALCOT PLACE AND HALSTEADS ESQUIRE YOUNGEST SON OF
ROBERT AND ELIZA SLADE WHO DIED ON THE 29TH MARCH 1868 AGED 79
AND IS ALSO BURIED IN THIS VAULT”

This last entry gives another piece of news. All the books and articles consulted give
Felix’s dates as 1790-1868. As the inscription says he died aged 79 it means he was
born in 1788. I thus searched the Baptism Register of St Mary’s Lambeth with the help
of Lambeth Archives. The entry for 30th August 1788 reads:

‘Felix Joseph Son of Robert Slade & Elizabeth – born August 6th’

This discovery not only confirms the precise year of his birth, but also gives us his
actual birthday. Moreover, I had never before seen Felix referred to as Felix Joseph.

If you have been brave enough to read this far perhaps you are wondering why Felix
Slade is remembered? Well, he died wealthy, his Will being valued at £160,000 (some
£10 million today). Of this, he bequeathed £45,000 to his executors, of which £35,000
was to be used ‘to found and endow within two years after my decease three or more
professorships for promoting the study of the Fine Arts to be termed the Slade
Professorships of Fine Arts’. These were at Oxford, Cambridge and University
College, London. At Oxford and Cambridge the holders of the Chairs, during their
relatively short terms of office, have produced outstanding series of lectures. The first
Slade Professors at Oxford and Cambridge were John Ruskin and Sir Matthew Digby
Wyatt, respectively.

Felix Slade’s bequest to University College London (UCL) linked the Professorship to
his parallel foundation of six scholarships (£50 per annum) for students under 19 years
of age. By 1871, UCL had augmented the bequest, built a new wing, and opened the
Slade School(s) of Fine Art. Students were admitted to an advanced syllabus under a
young and gifted Professor, Sir Edward Poynter RA - his inaugural lecture was an
account of the disposition of Slade’s bequest. By 1882, there were 44 male and 55
female students, and the premises had had to be extended. Nowadays there are over
200 full-time students, half of them postgraduates.

The original buildings still house the undergraduates. However, the antique and
extensive ‘life rooms’ are gone. One ‘life room’ remains, but in addition there are
painting, sculpture and multi-media studios, together with areas devoted to printmaking
and stage design. There are still strong links with the views of Slade’s generation:
investigation and experiment remain of great significance.

His mother’s brother The Reverend Thomas Hammond Foxcroft died in 1821 and left
the mansion and estate of Halsteads (near Thornton-in-Lonsdale, Yorkshire) to his two
surviving Slade nephews William and Felix. In that both their mother and father were
to die during the next 14 years they became wealthy. When William eventually died in 1858 Felix was his beneficiary.

When he was 12 years old Felix’s father took him to Italy and their itinerary included Venice. It may have been on this journey when glass caught his attention and great interest. His earliest documented piece in the British Museum (BM) he bought in 1817 when he was 29 and visited Rome; perhaps something he bought in Venice as a boy is also there? Over the years he built up a vast collection of glass and was a fastidious collector, indeed probably the best known of glass collectors. In those days he was able to buy from archaeological excavations so his collection became wide ranging. Before he died he put together a scholarly illustrated catalogue of his collection which was in an advanced state of preparation at his death. This publication was his magnum opus (although anonymous). In a codicil to his Will he left money for the completion and publication of the catalogue to enable it to go ahead under the editorship of his friend (and executor) Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks, Keeper of Mediaeval and Later Antiquities at the BM. It is a massive volume and was published with black and white illustrations the year following his death in 1869, and with colour plates in 1871. The contents detail the 944 pieces of glass he left to the BM. Even with this tremendous collection he must have felt there were gaps as he also left £3,000 to the museum to be spent on adding to his bequest. In Gallery 46 many items from his fine collection are displayed; there are more in Galleries 41 & 42. Unfortunately his collections of glass, ivories, rare bindings and prints have not been brought together for an exhibition and his bequests are scattered throughout the museum.

His bequest to the Department of Prints & Drawings at the BM amounted to 8,853 items. 2,163 are individual items and the remainder being sets of proofs of 19th century illustrations of use to students. There are many famous prints here such as William Hogarth’s 1817 engraving of Gin Lane and the etching by Anthony van Dyck of his well known self portrait of the late 1620s. A particular favourite is Cornelis Visscher’s The Large Cat, c.1657.

![Mid-14th Century enameled glass mosque lamp](image)

(Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)

![The Large Cat by Cornelis Visscher c.1657](image)

(Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum)
Felix’s Will makes interesting reading. He was most generous to his many relations and friends. He frequently visited his relations in Brighton (my great grandmother and her sister) and whilst there stayed in a hotel. He writes in his Will ‘I give to the waiter at the Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton commonly called Henry the sum of Ten pounds and to the Boots at the same Hotel commonly called Thomas the sum of Ten pounds’.

There is a long list of charities to whom he left money; included are 15 different hospitals or convalescent homes, 10 schools in London or near his Yorkshire estate. Other organizations in which he had a special interest also benefited. He remembered his parish churches in London and in Thornton-in-Lonsdale, which has many connections with his family ‘…the sum of Five thousand pounds either in the rebuilding wholly or partially or in the repair and restoration or improvement externally and internally of the Parish Church of Thornton-in-Lonsdale in the West Riding.’ The church was rebuilt in 1870, but was sadly burnt down during a blizzard in 1933 and again rebuilt in pink Tebay sandstone reproducing the original Norman arches.

Felix Slade was a very private man and held no public positions, although he was made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1866. There is only one known picture of him, a portrait in coloured chalks on grey paper by Margaret Carpenter, wife of his friend William Carpenter, keeper of Prints and Drawings at the BM.

He was anxious to remain private after his death and his Will: ‘I direct that all private papers belonging to me, including those which belonged to my Brother William shall be destroyed by my Executors except such that they may think fit to preserve. And the papers so preserved shall be kept in an iron safe which I have provided and such iron safe with the contents shall so long as the Trustees of this my Will shall think fit be placed in the custody of my Solicitor.’

![Slade family vault at Norwood (grave 5,736, square 62)](image-url)
A distant Great, Great, Great, Great Uncle of mine is buried at West Norwood. That is about all I knew at the start of the summer. I contacted FOWNC in the hope you could tell me more about him, having found a reference to William deBlaquiere in your Newsletter. Instead of the information I hoped would be forthcoming, I was asked if I could tell you all about him!! This is the current extent of my knowledge.

DeBlaquiere is a French noble family. John Blaquiere, a zealous Huguenot, took refuge in England in 1685. One of his sons became eminent as a London merchant; another settled at Lisburn in Ireland where his sister married John Crommelin, son of Louis. The fifth son, John (1732-1812), entered the army and rose to be Lieutenant Colonel of the 17th Light Dragoons. He held various public offices and was secretary of Legation at Paris 1771-2 (one of his responsibilities it was rumoured was to keep an eye on Bonnie Prince Charlie) and later became Chief Secretary to Lord Harcourt, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1772-7, and Bailiff of Phoenix Park (Fion Uisce, ‘clear water’). He was made a baronet in 1784, and later still for his support of the Union he was created Baron de Blaquiere of Ardkill on 30 July 1800. The house he built in Phoenix Park was surrounded by 62 acres of parkland and was completed in 1776. It was purchased by the Government in 1782 and made the official residence of the Chief Secretary, and remained so until 1922. It is now the US Ambassador’s residence.

A Life in the Army

William ‘it is said’ was born on 22 December 1778 in Paris, the 2nd son of John Blaquiere and Eleanor Dobson. Why William was born in France I do not know. There is little information on his early life. He probably spent his childhood in Ireland, perhaps in Dublin. However, he entered the Army as Ensign in the 56th foot (later the West Essex Regiment) on 31 August 1791, probably by purchase. He was gazetted
Major 25th Light Dragoons 1 February 1798 and Lt Colonel 22nd Light Dragoons on 22 January 1801. Other appointments followed: Lt Colonel 2 Dragoon Guards, 1805; Lt Colonel 71st foot (later the Highland Light Infantry), 1807; Major General, 1813; Lt General, 1825; General, 1841. He served in Flanders, the Cape of Good Hope, and in India.

On 16 September 1811 William had married Henrietta Townsend, daughter of Field Marshall George, 4th Viscount and 1st Marquis Townshend and his 2nd wife Anne, daughter of Sir William Montgomery, Bart. One would think a handsome marriage! William and Henrietta’s first son, John, was born on 2 July 1812, and their only daughter Rose on 27 October 1813. However things had started to go badly wrong as they separated in 1814, and divorce followed. Henrietta resided at 7 Weymouth Street, London, 1813-27, and their second son William was born here on 16 December 1814. Could this have been a property owned by her mother?

Henrietta seems to have spent 1828 in Brighton. By 4 February 1829 she had moved to a Grace and Favour lodging at Hampton Court and remained here until her death on 9 November 1848. Lady Henrietta remarried, but when and to whom I have not yet discovered. Various court cases between William and Henrietta took place over the years, revealing some sad personal details. These are still quoted today from time to time as an example of the various liabilities/responsibilities of a husband to his ex-wife, and vice versa.

**Suicide at Beulah Hill**

The sad note continued with the death of Rose in 1818 (I wonder where she is buried!) and ended with William shooting himself in his house, the address according to one source being Arnold’s Road, Beulah Hill, on 12 November 1851. The Coroner’s Court heard that ‘he had been a great sufferer from disease, an unusually large stone had been found in the bladder, and this circumstance, combined with the disease of smallpox, had doubtless produced the nervous debility which had so impaired his Lordship’s mind’. [An editorial note is necessary here: there is no Arnold's Road off Beulah Hill, but this could be a mis-hearing of Arnull's Road, a cul-de-sac off Gibson's Hill near its upper end where it meets Beulah Hill. According to a report in the *Westmeath Guardian* December 1851, William died at Beulah Villa, described as a large house or even a mansion, with servants and a gardener. His entry in Boase, *Modern English Biography*, just says: shot himself, Beulah Hill, Norwood. More recently, John Coulter, usually a reliable source, in his book *Norwood Past*, has given the address of the suicide as Alton Cottage, Arnull's Road. It seems more research is needed at Croydon Archives to establish the correct house and find out whether it still survives.]

His will, dated 25 April 1849 and written at East Dulwich, shows the rift with his family was carried to the end. He made adequate financial provision for his son John as he would inherit the title. He rewarded his servants and friends in a open handed manner and his housekeeper in particular was generously provided for ‘my present housekeeper as a just reward for her valuable service to me for nearly 20 years, her
unremitted attendance on me during many years of unparalleled bodily suffering, and whose services have mainly tended to prolong my life to the prejudice of her own’.

On a happier note, William’s army career seems to have been a huge success. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, a director of the French Hospital, Victoria Park, and is reputed to have made the English translation of the 3 volume Thirty Years German War by Friedrich Schiller, although this is sometimes attributed to Captain Edward Blaquiere RN from my branch of the family. He succeeded his brother in the peerage in 1844 and probably succeeded to the appointment of Great Alnager of Ireland (Alnager: sworn officer to examine and attest the measurement and quality of woollen goods) at this time. The House of Commons Committee on the Alnage Laws of Ireland reported in June 1819 that

‘the Alnage Laws are wholly inapplicable to the present state of woollen manufacture and should be immediately repealed. The committee recommends that Lord de Blaquiere, who has a vested right in a Patent for office of Alnager, should be compensated for loss of office out of money made available by the Government and not by a tax on woollen trade and manufacture’.

William’s sons both went on to inherit the title Lord de Blaquiere. John’s claim to fame is that he purchased the yacht America after its famous win at Cowes in 1851, the race being the 1st of the series now known as the America’s Cup. William became a Captain RN and received a Royal Humane Society Award for saving a boy from drowning in a dock basin in 1848. The name de Blaquiere was adopted by all descendents of Lt Col James Blaquiere (John 1st Lord's elder and only surviving brother) after the death of William, 6th and last Lord de Blaquiere, on 28 July 1920.

Postscript

I have not as yet visited William’s tomb at West Norwood (grave 3,035, square 48 – an impressive granite sarcophagus in good condition, curiously giving his birthday as 26 January, next to the site of the Episcopalian Chapel). However when talking to a very distant and obscure de Blaquiere descendent who has visited it he told me he was overcome with a feeling of ‘not being wanted there’. I will be interested to see if I experience the same feeling!

William, 3rd Lord de Blaquiere's tomb at Norwood

This book is a very detailed and thoroughly researched history of the Cremation Society (founded 1874) and the obstacles it faced in establishing cremation as a morally and legally acceptable alternative to the burial of the dead. It is a scholarly and relatively expensive work, and although extensively illustrated it is doubtless aimed at an academic rather than a general audience.

The development of cremation first in Italy, and then of the cremator for public use in 1885 at Woking are documented in great detail, due acknowledgement being paid to the pioneering research of Bryan Fenner, former Superintendent at Woking, in this area. The arrangements for early cremations, including medical certification and the progress of the movement down to the passing of the Cremation Act of 1902, when London finally received its first crematorium at Golders Green, are described in great detail.

There are some fascinating insights – for example, I had not realized the impact of the famous ‘Ashes’ test (organized at the Oval by C.W. Alcock in 1882 – see FOWNC booklet West Norwood Cemetery’s Sportsmen) in bringing cremation to the attention of the wider public and the use of an urn as a repository for ashes.

Brian Parsons has worked in the funeral industry in London since 1982 and is a prolific author. He has written essays for The Handbook of Death and Dying and the forthcoming Encyclopedia of Cremation. He is the author of The London Way of Death (2001) and JH Kenyon: The First 125 Years (2005).

The cover of the present volume vouchsafes that he is also revising Hugh Meller’s London Cemeteries – hopefully the publishers will let him make a proper job of a revision this time.
Our contribution to Open House London Weekend on 18 September took a similar form to recent years. The cemetery staff arranged the annual Memorial Service, along with an exhibition of old photographs and artefacts, two horse-drawn hearses (one black, one white) and a real novelty - a Harley Davidson motorcycle/sidecar hearse! The FOWNC bookstall was open all afternoon in the Maddick mausoleum, and we led a series of tours including the exhibition and the Greek Chapel which was open for viewing. Around 80 to 90 visitors attended the tours. Thanks to all who helped, especially Don Bianco for his talks about the Greek Chapel.

After our AGM on 15 October, we heard a talk about Charles Haddon Spurgeon, known in his day as the ‘prince of preachers’, by the Deputy Principal of Spurgeon’s College, Ian Randall. Spurgeon was born in Kelvedon, Essex in 1834 and was drawn to the religious ministry from an early age. At 16, he had become a Sunday school teacher and began preaching, his powers of oratory already attracting attention. He took baptism by total immersion in the Baptist tradition and came to London to preach at New Park Street chapel in Southwark. He adopted an approach of assuming that many people did not know much about religion, and used ‘new’ methods of communication, such as holding religious meetings in theatres. Spurgeon drew such large numbers to the New Park Street chapel that a larger venue was required, and he collected funds to build the Metropolitan Tabernacle at the Elephant & Castle. He taught students in the basement of the Tabernacle, and was known for being able to speed-read, for a phenomenal memory and for his humour, such that his students delighted in trying to catch him out. Spurgeon’s eminence grew and in 1857 he preached to an audience at the Crystal Palace of some 23,000 people!

Spurgeon was very interested in political matters and social issues, building an orphanage at Stockwell and also almshouses and a refuge for prostitutes. His wife Susannah, whom he married in 1856, began his library (now located in America). Their two sons, Thomas and Charles, both became Baptist ministers. Spurgeon died at Mentone in France in January 1892, and his body was brought to Norwood where his
funeral (he is buried in grave 24,395, square 38) was said to be the largest ever held in the cemetery. Both the Metropolitan Tabernacle and the orphanage at Stockwell were built by Spurgeon’s great friend, the building contractor William Higgs (1824-1883) who lies near him at Norwood (grave 8,520, square 52).

We were pleased to welcome local historian Brian Bloice on 19 November, with his personal selection of interesting people with South London connections and their graves. A virtual tour of the ‘Magnificent Seven’ cemeteries and some others visited many notables, including Andrew Ducrow, equestrian performer and manager of Astley's Amphitheatre, a circus in Lambeth, with his mausoleum at Kensal Green; Michael Faraday, pioneer of electromagnetic science, born in Newington and buried at Highgate; James Braidwood, fire fighting chief, killed in a fire in Tooley Street and buried at Abney Park; Sir Ernest George, architect of a number of houses in Streatham and of Golders Green Crematorium, where he himself was cremated and his ashes placed in a private chapel (whilst his parents are buried at Norwood); Thomas Tilling, omnibus pioneer, buried at Nunhead; and Sir James Knowles, architect of some grand terraces in Clapham, and buried at Brighton - his father, the architect James Thomas Knowles (1806-1884) is buried at Norwood (grave 8,643, square 75).

Sir Ernest George

Forthcoming FOWNC Events
January - April 2006

General tours will be held on the first Sunday of each month (1 January, 5 February, 5 March and 2 April). January to March tours start at 11.00 and the April tour starts at 14.30, at the Cemetery main gate off Norwood Road, and they last for 1½-2 hours. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person (£0.50 concessions) towards conservation projects.

Spring Lectures

Talks will be held at Chatsworth Baptist Church, Chatsworth Way (off Norwood Road), SE27 (enter by second door on right in Idmiston Road) as detailed below, starting at 14.30. There is no formal charge but we welcome donations of £1 per person to help cover the hall hire.

Continued overpage
Saturday 18 February: Joseph Towne, Charles Hilton Fagge and the Gordon Museum by Bill Edwards

Towne (1808-1879) was an anatomical modeller and worked at Guy's Hospital for fifty years. Many of his models survive in the museum at Guy's. Fagge (1838-1883) was physician at Guy's and prepared many dermatological specimens for Towne to model. He was the nephew of John Hilton (1804-1878), Surgeon at Guy's 1849-70 and Surgeon Emeritus to Queen Victoria (see Newsletter 50, May 2004). Our speaker is the current Keeper of the Museum.

Saturday 18 March: Remembering the fallen: war memorials in Britain by Hilary Rosser

A topical talk to follow last year's events commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Our speaker is a FOWNC member and a lecturer and guide at Dulwich Picture Gallery.